

Triennial Torah Study – 1st Year 29/01/2011

sightedmoon.com /triennial-torah-study-6-year-04042015 /

By Joseph F. Dumond

Gen 48	2 Sam 24	Ps 94-98	Luke 11
---------------	-----------------	-----------------	----------------

Gen 48

This is a very important chapter in the bible. If you do not know who these people became, you will not know who the prophecies of the bible pertain to. In short Jacob gave the first born blessing to the younger son Ephraim.

So who is Manasseh and who is Ephraim today in our modern times. I would like to present you with a teaching Steven Collins did after 9/11. [http://stevenmcollins.com/Ephraim and Manasseh.pdf](http://stevenmcollins.com/Ephraim_and_Manasseh.pdf)

EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH: ALLIES IN THE MODERN WORLD

By Steven M. Collins

This column has been stimulated by an extraordinary, even historic event. On September 11, 2001, the United States was heavily attacked by radical Islamic terrorists. The terrorists turned four hijacked airliners into flying Fuel Air Explosive bombs as they utterly destroyed the World Trade Center in New York and badly damaged the Pentagon in Washington DC. The devastation in Manhattan looks like London, Coventry, Berlin or Dresden after they were bombed in World War II! According to one article I read this week, the attack destroyed or damaged 20% of all the office space in New York City and it killed or wounded thousands of Americans! It was the costliest attack upon American soil since our nation was founded.

It now seems apparent the fourth airliner was destined to ram into the Capitol or White House, but heroic efforts by passengers on the doomed flight prevented the terrorists from hitting their target with the fourth aircraft. These passengers were told by spouses and friends via cellphones about the other hijacked airliners rammed into the World Trade Center, so the passengers decided to sacrifice themselves to save their fellow citizens.

President Bush has rallied our nation which has not been this unified since World War II. He gave a speech to a joint session of Congress setting forth America's determination to wage war on terrorism and those nations, which harbor terrorists. Sitting in the Congressional gallery was a single foreign head-of-state. Tony Blair, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, was present as a symbol of the unequivocal support of the British people for America. As President Bush acknowledged Mr. Blair's presence, he received an ovation from the assembled leadership of the American government (and American citizens watching the speech all over the nation).

Other foreign leaders could have come as well to be a part of the event, but they chose not to do so. Other nations will help America's war on terrorism, of course, but no nation is as supportive as Great Britain. As this column is being written, the news media have shown footage of a British fleet already passing through the Suez Canal on its way to join forces with the gathering US fleet in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea. The British fleet apparently consists of one jump-jet aircraft carrier, an attack submarine and eleven other warships. While other

nations will join the coalition for quid-pro-quo or because of shared vital interests, the British support of America goes far deeper.

This mutual support between the British and Americans has a fundamental cause which goes much deeper than sharing a common language or culture. Both Yair Davidy (www.Britam.org) and I have identified the English and American peoples as primarily the descendants of the Israelite tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, respectively. The British-American alliance is based on the fact that they are truly “brother” nations who descended from the two sons of Joseph: Ephraim and Manasseh. By divine favor, these nations have received the lion’s share of the many birthright blessings of the Covenant God made with Abraham long ago. The bond between America and Britain is based on a blood relationship.

We must also not forget that Canada, Australia and New Zealand share the Ephraimite roots of the British. When the airliners were being hijacked and it became necessary to ground all airliners, Canadian airports freely hosted many redirected American airliners. Australia had a contingent of soldiers training in the USA, and the Australian government announced they could be deployed to the Middle East along with the American troops. The USA worked just as closely with Canada, Australia and New Zealand as it did with the British in a global alliance in World War II to liberate Europe and the rest of world from Axis domination.

Of course, America has also supported the British in their times of greatest need. The Americans rallied to the help of Great Britain in both World Wars I and II, turning the tide twice against the Axis powers. This column will demonstrate that this relationship has existed throughout history. This column will mention other instances where the tribe of Manasseh rallied to join the Ephraimites in wars to defeat a common enemy.

After the tribes of Israel were expelled from their ancient homelands in Eretz Israel, they grew mighty and possessed huge populations (Josephus documents this promise in Hosea 1:6-10 and it had been fulfilled by the 1st century AD). As documented in my book, the relocated tribes of Israel included the Scythians (known also as “Sacae,” named after Isaac their forefather), and the Parthians.

The tribe of Manasseh came to be one of the dominant tribes of the Scythians, and the Greeks called them the Massagetae. These Massagetae were located in the Caspian Sea region, and they were, I believe, the descendants of the half-tribe of Manasseh taken captive by the Assyrians in approximately 741 BC when Gilead’s tribes were taken by the Assyrians. When the Assyrian Empire fell, those Israelites who were captives were free to migrate elsewhere and they migrated toward the Caspian Sea. These related tribes were known as the Eastern Scythians/Sacae and they were led by the Massagetae. One would expect the birthright tribe of Manasseh to be one of their leading tribes.

These Massagetae were attacked by Cyrus the Great and the Persian Empire in the 6th century BC in an apparent attempt to bring them under a new Persian captivity. Israelites are freedom-loving people and they fought fiercely to prevent any new captivity. Herodotus records that virtually the entire Persian Army died along with King Cyrus himself as the Massagetae gained a total victory.

It is my view that the other half of the tribe of Manasseh migrated to the Black Sea region along with several other tribes just before the final Assyrian invasion, which conquered the city of Samaria. This mass of migrating Israelites established Sacae Scythian kingdoms in the Black Sea region as well as the Kingdom of Iberia (named after Eber, the forefather of the Hebrews) in the Caucasus Mountains.

The Parthian Empire, which rivaled the Roman Empire for centuries, was founded primarily by the tribe of Ephraim. Listed below is an excerpt from one of my new books. The type-face is different and the endnotes

dropped out as I “cut and pasted” this text, so the source documents are noted but the page numbers do not appear.

“...Numbers 26:35-36 records that three clans of the Israelite tribe of Ephraim were named the Bachrites, the Eranites, and the Tahanites. The Seleucid province of Bactria, which revolted along with Parthia, bore the name of one of the clans of Ephraim in a Hellenized form. An Israelite origin for Bactria is supported by an account from Richard Frye’s book, *The Heritage of Persia*, which states that the Bactrian language “...was related to Saka, or at least underwent strong influences from Saka tongues.” The Persian word “Saka” referred to the Sacae Scythians. The record that the Bactrians welcomed a Scythian ruler who freed them from a Greek satrap, and the fact that the Bactrians shared a linguistic heritage with the Parthians argues that the Bactrians were also Sacae (or Saka) who had descended from the ten tribes of Israel.

Henry Rawlinson, in his book *Bactria*, states: “there seems to be very little doubt that the population of Bactria was largely Scythian” ...[and cites Justin, a classical author, who wrote] “The Bactrian Empire was founded by the Scythians.”

Numbers 26:36 also notes that another clan of the tribe of Ephraim descended from Eran and was known as the “Eranites.” A group of people known as the Eranians were present in the region of ancient Persia and Parthia. Assyria had transplanted the defenders of Samaria (an Ephraimite city) into “the cities of the Medes.” Therefore, we should expect to see Ephraimite names in the Medo-Persian region. The “Eranians” manifested the exact Hebrew name of one of the clans of Ephraim in the area of Medo-Persia. This name has survived into modern times as the English name for modern Persia is Iran. The terms “Iran” and “Eran” are interchangeable. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1943 Edition), in its Index section, simply states “Eran: see Iran.” The capital of Iran, Teheran, also preserves the name of this

Ephraimite clan. This book does not assert or imply that modern Iranians are Israelites as it is clear from history that modern Iranians are principally Medo-Persian in racial origins. However, the name “Iran” is derived from the name of a clan of Ephraim, which was placed in Medo-Persian territory by the Assyrians and lived there for many centuries.

Most historical accounts assume that the name “Eran” originated from the term “Aryan.” However, historical accounts generally have not considered an Israelite alternative for the origin of the Eranians. Indeed, historical accounts seem unwilling to even look for the large masses of Israelites who were relocated into Asia. The case for an Israelite origin for the Eranians is very strong. Not only are the Eranians found in the correct geographical location where Israelite tribes and clans were placed (Medo-Persia), but there were many other ancient names in that region with an Israelite origin!”

My new book goes on to explain the Ephraimite clan of “Tahan” was known as “Dahan” by the Greco-Romans who wrote about the Parthians. The Ephraimite dominance of the Parthian Empire is clear. Josephus wrote that the ten tribes were “in Asia” and “beyond [the] Euphrates” in his lifetime. The Euphrates River was the border between the Roman and Parthian Empires then, so Josephus was designating that the ten tribes “were in Parthia.” Since Ephraim was the chief birthright tribe of the ten tribes of Israel, it is no surprise to find the Ephraimite clans in a leadership role in Parthia.

Indeed, the Greeks often wrote a “p” where we usually find a “b.” For example, the Greeks referred to the “Britannic Isles” as the “Pretannic Isles.” If we read the “P” in Parthia as a “B,” we see the word “Barthia” or “B’rithia” appear as the real name of the Parthian Empire. Herein we easily see the Hebrew word for covenant, “Berith” or “B’rit” (dare we say “Brits?”) as forming the basis for the word “Parthia.” Ephraim was the chief tribe

to inherit the birthright promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. Therefore, the presence of the Hebrew word for "Covenant" is an appropriate name for an empire dominated by Ephraimites.

Many historians have commented that the Scythians and Parthians were related tribes to each other. The Parthian Empire was in direct contact and rivalry with such other empires as the Seleucid Greek Empire and, later, the Roman Empire. The Scythians were more "isolationist" and generally avoided conflict with other nations and empires to their south. The one great exception is when the Black Sea Scythians invaded and destroyed the Assyrian Empire in the late 7th century BC. When the Parthians were in danger of being defeated by either the Seleucid or Roman Empires, the Sacae of Scythia would often send armies to fight on the side of the Parthians to ensure the Seleucids and Romans were defeated. George Rawlinson's book, *The Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy*, particularly mentions many of these instances.

Given that the Scythians were dominated by Manasseh and the Parthians by Ephraim, we can see remarkable parallels in these ancient events to those of the 20th century. Even as Manasseh came to the rescue of Ephraim when the Scythians assisted the Parthians in their ancient wars, the same thing happened as the Americans came to the rescue of the British Empire in two World Wars. In the modern world, we have recently seen the Americans and the British team up enthusiastically in the Persian Gulf War and now the new War on Terrorism. They join forces as the brothers they are whenever danger or war comes upon them. As we can see from ancient history, theirs is a natural alliance, which has occurred over and over again in history.

As I conclude this column, we again see the bonds between Ephraim and Manasseh uniting these nations when one of the brother nations is attacked. Other nations of modern Israelite will join the latest alliance yet and so will other non-Israelite nations. However, considerable wheeling and dealing and negotiating will occur before these other nations decide on their contributions to the war effort. However, Tony Blair and the British have once again implemented the blood-brother alliance of Ephraim and Manasseh. While other nations are still deliberating on what to do, the British simply say: "Here we are, what can we do to help?"

There is evidence the modern alliance of Ephraim and Manasseh goes deeper than anyone realizes or acknowledges. The nations of the European Union allege that there exists a secret, worldwide intelligence-gathering operation known as "Echelon." In an article in my home-town newspaper, *The Sioux Falls Argus-Leader* (a Gannett Newspaper) on September 6th, 2001, it was noted the European Union had voted 367-159 "to adopt 44 recommendations on how to counter Echelon." The article, with a Brussels, Belgium dateline, added that "Echelon is run by the United States in cooperation with Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand." As those who have read Yair Davidy's book(s), or mine know (Can be ordered from www.Britam.org, or www.ChristianReality.com), the nation's comprising the "Echelon" alliance are the modern nations of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. Echelon appears to be a shadowy, but very real alliance of the entire House of Joseph in the modern world. Is not it interesting that without even knowing their common Israelite origins, these nations have gravitated together into a very close alliance?

As I close this column, I think again of the singular presence of British Prime Minister Tony Blair in the Congressional Gallery as President George Bush addressed the entire government of the United States. His presence spoke volumes. He did not have to be there, but he came anyway in our time of national trouble and challenge. He came because that is what brothers do in a time of crisis.

Speaking from the standpoint of an American, I close this column with a heartfelt appreciation of our brother nation when I say: "God bless the British!" Steven Collins

2 Sam 24

<http://www.azamra.org/Bible/II%20Samuel%2023-24.htm>

CHAPTER 24

This very mysterious chapter is a fitting climax to the story of David, because it describes the chain of events that led him to discover the site of the Temple, to the preparation for whose building his entire life had been devoted.

Rashi on I Kings 3:7 provides a detailed chronology of the last twelve years of David's life from the birth of Solomon onwards. Solomon had been born immediately prior to Amnon's rape of Tamar, two years after which Absalom held the sheep-shearing celebration at which he had Amnon assassinated. Thereafter Absalom spent three years in exile in Geshur before returning to Jerusalem for two years before his rebellion. This was followed by the three years of famine that were rectified through the reburial of Saul's bones together with those of his 7 grandchildren slain by the Gibeonites (II Sam ch 21:1). This was in the tenth year after the birth of Solomon.

It was thus in the eleventh year after Solomon's birth that David ordered his count of the population, while in the twelfth year – which was the last year of David's life – he reorganized the priestly Temple duty-rota, after which he died. (Solomon was 12 years old when he came to the throne.)

David's census was apparently carried out for "military" purposes since the numbers given in verse 9 are of "sword-wielding men", but this also alludes to the "sword" of prayer. It is not clear exactly what David had in mind when he insisted on holding a census despite the fact that the Torah expressly teaches that Israel must not be counted directly in order not to suffer a plague (Exodus 30:12). From David's later contrition for having sinned (v 10) it is clear that he knew very well that it was wrong to count the people. The fact that he was able to persuade himself to do so indicates that he allowed himself to fall prey to some kind of rationalization that justified the census. The mind can play tricks on even the greatest of people. It was evidently through this rationalization which God planted in his mind that He "incited" David to sin (v 1). It is said that He did so in retribution for David's having introduced the same concept when he much earlier said that God had "incited" Saul against him (I Samuel 26:19). The paradox is that despite the fact that the census was a mistake and led to a terrible plague, it did, nevertheless, lead indirectly to David's discovery of the site of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Joab was opposed to the census, arguing eloquently that Israel can be greatly blessed numerically by God without having to count them – Joab's blessings for Israelite population growth are compared favorably with those of Moses (Deut. 1:11). Joab's opposition to the king here is noteworthy since he actually rebelled against him at the very end of David's life one year later. Yet in spite of his reservations, Joab journeyed around the entire Israelite settlement east and west of the River Jordan. From Jerusalem he crossed over to the east bank of the Jordan and started his mission in the city of Aro'er, the southernmost settlement of the Reubenites. There "he camped" (v 5) – i.e. he took his time, hoping all along that the king would relent. Then he worked his way up northwards through the territories of Gad and Menasheh in Gil'ad, before going up to Dan (in the north of present-day Israel), further north to the "new" settlements in Syria and the BIK'AH (valley) of Lebanon, and then westwards to the Mediterranean coast, where he counted the Israelite populations in Sidon, Tyre and all the settlements further south, returning thereafter to Jerusalem. We thus have biblical evidence of Israelite settlements in Syria and Lebanon back in the time of David.

As soon as Joab returned with his report, David was smitten with remorse and contrition for having counted Israel – because Israel are beyond the concept of number, which is finite.

Putting a "number" on Israel puts finite limits on the people and their ability to receive blessing.

Souls cannot be counted, because each one is totally unique and has infinite potential. Counting the people lays them open to the Evil Eye, which views abundant blessing with mean-eyed hostility.

It was the prophet Gad who brought God's grim decree to David: until the very end of his life, David conducted himself in all his affairs in accordance with the prophets, unlike Saul, who had disobeyed them. Gad offered David three alternatives in order to expiate his sin: seven years of famine, three months of defeat in war or three days of plague. (Similarly, David had said that Saul would die in one of three ways, I Samuel 26:10). In a famous verse that is part of the Tahanun supplications in the daily prayers (v 14), David threw himself upon God's mercy – reasoning that famine would hurt the poor more than the rich and war would hurt the weak more than the mighty, while a plague would strike indiscriminately, thus spreading the suffering more fairly (RaDaK on v 14).

“Through the very wound, God sends the medicine”. The plague was mercifully short – less than the three days originally announced by the prophet (v 15, RaDaK), and when David saw the angel with his sword drawn over Jerusalem, he prayed for compassion. According to the midrash on v 16 (BA-AM RAV, lit. “with many people”), the dead included Avishai son of Tzeruyah (Joab's heroic brother): the loss of a sage who was the equivalent of more than half (ROV) of the Sanhedrin brought atonement (Berachos 62b). With this, the Angel stopped the slaughter – and David saw that the Angel was standing by the side of the Threshing-floor of Aravna (RaDaK on v 16). Aravna was the “Jebusite” Prince of Jerusalem – though not one of the Canaanite Jebusites, but a Philistine descendant of Avimelech in the time of Abraham.

According to Metzudas David (v 16), he was a righteous convert.

Since it is prayers in the Temple that save Israel from plagues and other evils, David knew that the site at which he prayed successfully for the cessation of the plague was none other than the location of the Temple, which God had promised He would choose from among the territories of the tribes (Deut. 12:14).

Aravna was willing to GIVE David the site to build his altar together with the ox for the sacrifice and the wood to burn it (v 22) but David protested, “I shall surely ACQUIRE them from you for a PRICE and I will not offer up to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost nothing” (v 24). There is a discrepancy between the fifty shekels of SILVER mentioned as the price here and the sum of SIX HUNDRED shekels of GOLD mentioned in I Chronicles 21:25. This is resolved through the fact that David collected fifty golden shekels from each of the twelve tribes to buy the site of the Temple (“from all your tribes” Deut. 12:4; $50 \times 12 = 600$) while he paid for the ox and wood for his altar with fifty silver shekels (Talmud Zevachim 116b).

Just as Abraham had PURCHASED the Cave of Machpelah as the burial place of the patriarchs with GOOD MONEY, similarly David PURCHASED the site of the Temple with GOOD MONEY, which means that all those who claim that Hebron and the Temple Mount do not belong to the people of Israel are guilty of blatant slander.

“The rabbis taught that all the thousands who fell from the plague in the days of David died because they did not demand the building of the Temple. If people who had never had a Temple built or destroyed in their lifetimes fell in the plague because they had failed to demand the Temple, how much more are we, who have already had a Temple and had it destroyed, obligated to demand the rebuilding of the Temple. Therefore the elders and prophets instituted the planting of prayers three times daily in the mouths of Israel for the return of the Divine Presence and Kingship to Zion and the order of Your service to Jerusalem, Amen.” (Radak on v 25).

I would like you all to note verse 17 And Dawid? spoke to ???? when he saw the messenger who was smiting the people, and said, “See, I have sinned, and I have done perversely. But these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, be against me and against my father's house.”

The people being killed by the angel were referred to as sheep. During Passover the sheep are offered for the slaughter. We know there are two Passovers each year. The second one is for those who could not be at the first one due to travel. And in the Prophecies of Abraham I show you that at this second Passover Satan is going to kill many of the brethren at this second Passover.

Psalm 44:22 NKJ

Yet for Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Also note David paid good money to buy the threshing floor where the Temple would later stand. He would not take it as a gift. He would not use something to offer to Jehovah what did not cost him anything. Brethren consider this carefully. How many of you want to go to the Farm once we have it yet will not put anything towards it. You have many excuses, but if it does not cost you anything then what value is it to you? Ps 94-98

[http://www.ucg.org/bible-commentary/Psalms/92\)-Thanks-to-God-for-His-faithfulness,whereby-the-righteous-will-triumph-and-the-wicked-will-perish;-93\)-The-eternal-andinvincible-reign-of-God;-94\)-Prayer-for-God-to-bring-justice/default.aspx](http://www.ucg.org/bible-commentary/Psalms/92)-Thanks-to-God-for-His-faithfulness,whereby-the-righteous-will-triumph-and-the-wicked-will-perish;-93)-The-eternal-andinvincible-reign-of-God;-94)-Prayer-for-God-to-bring-justice/default.aspx)

“Psalm 94 is a royal psalm, since the phrase ‘Judge of the earth’ (v. 2) is equivalent to ‘King’ (50:4-6). The righteous call for the divine Judge to punish evil in the world (82:8; 96:13; 98:9)” (Nelson Study Bible, note on Psalm 94). It is also a lament over present conditions, wherein the psalmist-David if the Septuagint’s attribution is correct-pleads for the time of divine intervention in world affairs described in the surrounding psalms. The double repetition of statements and thoughts throughout magnifies the urgency and impact of the psalm.

The song begins by doubly stressing that vengeance belongs to God and asking that He would take action and punish the proud (verses 1-2; compare 79:10; Deuteronomy 32:35; Romans 12:19). Of course, we must understand that God’s “vengeance” is not a hateful tit-for-tat lashing out but the exercise of perfect justice tempered, as circumstances warrant, with patience and mercy.

The psalmist twice cries out with the common lament phrase “how long,” aching to know how long the world must endure wicked people perpetrating their evil ways. Verses 5-6 mention the harm they do to the weak of society. God commanded that special care be shown to those in need, but the wicked afflict and murder them! And all the while they are blasphemous in their arrogant attitude, thinking they are getting away with something despite God-as if He has no understanding of what’s going on (verses 4, 7).

But they are the ones who need to understand-that He knows exactly what is going on. He is the One who invented seeing and hearing and the means to experiencing them! And He sees and hears everything (verses 8-9). He will teach the nations a powerful lesson about who He is and His acute awareness through the correction He administers (verse 10). The thoughts of man are nothing next to what He knows and what He can bring to pass (compare verse 11).

Far better than instruction from severe correction is to be instructed from God’s law (verse 12)as those who submit to Him are. Learning the teachings of Scripture gives us “rest”-i.e., comfort and peace-until the time that God chooses to bring His judgment on the wicked (verse 13). For through God’s Word we come to understand that He will not abandon His people (verse 14) and that just judgment will at some point return (verse 15)-in an ultimate sense when God’s Kingdom is at last established on the earth.

In verse 16, the psalmist rhetorically asks twice who will act for him against evildoers. The answer, of course, as the next few verses make clear, is God. Indeed, in verse 17 the psalmist declares that God has already helped

him-otherwise he would be dead. This is true for all of us even now. Consider that if God did not restrain Satan and his demons, they would surely have already exterminated mankind, and God's people in particular. The psalmist knows that God is there to help him even when he thinks he's falling (verse 18). In the midst of the worry and fear that all experience, the psalmist knows that God provides him with comfort and true happiness to make it through life (verse 19).

In verse 20 the psalmist asks, "Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, have fellowship with You?" The question is obviously rhetorical, as the answer is surely no. But whom is the psalmist talking about here? Most take the reference here to evil people in positions of power generally. That could be. Yet if the psalmist is David or one of his royal successors, he could instead be referring to himself. That is, he would be rhetorically asking, "If my rule as king were evil, could I have fellowship with You?"

Again, the answer would be no. And the fellowship he has with God would testify to the righteousness of his reign-classing him among the innocent whom the wicked oppose (see verse 21).

In verse 22, the psalmist reaffirms his confidence in God's ongoing protection (compare verse 17). And he closes in verse 23 with the assurance that God has brought on the wicked their own iniquity and will yet bring this to fullness in final judgment. Here we see that God's laws exact their own penalty on those who live in defiance of them. The present life of the wicked is not so rosy as it might appear at a glance. And in the end, those who persist in evil will-as is twice stated in keeping with the repetition through the psalm-be destroyed.

This then sets the stage for the Kingdom of God, wherein only the righteous may rule and flourish.

[http://www.ucg.org/bible-commentary/Psalms/95\)-Call-to-worship-and-to-not-repeatIsrael's-past-rebellion;-96\)-Sing-praise-to-God,-who-is-coming-to-judge-the-world-withrighteousness-and-truth;-97\)-Rejoicing-in-God's-reign-of-r/default.aspx](http://www.ucg.org/bible-commentary/Psalms/95)-Call-to-worship-and-to-not-repeatIsrael's-past-rebellion;-96)-Sing-praise-to-God,-who-is-coming-to-judge-the-world-withrighteousness-and-truth;-97)-Rejoicing-in-God's-reign-of-r/default.aspx)

"The Great King Above All Gods" (Psalms 95-97)

As noted in the Bible Reading Program comments on Psalm 93, Psalms 95-99 are royal psalms celebrating God as King-perhaps composed for temple worship during the fall festival season. Though these psalms have no attribution in the Hebrew text of the Scriptures, the Greek Septuagint translation titles them "of David." The New Testament confirms this attribution in the case of Psalm 95, quoting from the psalm (compare verses 7-11; Hebrews 3:7-11) and declaring it the work of the Holy Spirit (verse 7) through David (4:7).

Psalm 95 moves through three aspects of worship: celebration (verses 1-5); humility and reverence (verses 6-7); and obedience (verses 8-11). Beginning with the celebration aspect, David calls for people to praise God with shouts, thanksgiving and joyful singing (verses 1-2).

The reasons for praise? God is great and above all gods (verse 3)-meaning above all false idols (see 96:4-5)-for He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, including everything that people have set up as objects of worship (95:4-5; compare 96:5). This is also the reason for obedience. The Expositor's Bible Commentary points out that God's role as Creator establishes His kingship. Since God "has made everything, no one may isolate a single aspect of God's creation to be his god. The Lord rules over the seas (93:3-4) and the great mountains (90:1-2). They belong to the Lord by creative fiat. Creation and dominion are hereby established as corollary to each other" (note on 95:3-5).

In light of God being our Maker and our God, we worship and bow down before Him (verse 6). "The Hebrew word translated worship means literally 'to prostrate oneself.' When bow down, kneel, and worship occur together as

in this verse, they amplify each other and call for a reflective, humble approach to God” (Nelson Study Bible, note on verses 6-7).

Verse 7 further explains the basis for honoring and obeying God: “We are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.” This seems a mixed metaphor, with people in a pasture. Note the unmixed metaphor in Psalm 100:3: “We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.” However, reversing these is justified on the basis of the whole picture of people under a king as the sheep of a shepherd being a rather common metaphor in the ancient world. “Since kings were commonly called the ‘shepherds’ of their people...their realms could be referred to as their ‘pastures’ (see Jer 25:36; 49:20; 50:45)” (Zondervan NIV Study Bible, note on Psalm 95:7). We live in the “pasture” of the earth, which was formed by God.

Moreover, like the earth we ourselves are “of His hand”-made by Him and in His care.

Sheep know and follow the voice of their shepherd (John 10:3-4). Yet the nation of Israel had not done so well as the sheep of God’s flock. David urges us to hear the Shepherd’s voice (Psalm 95:7b, which tells us to not become stubborn, rebellious and wayward, as ancient

Israel had become in the wilderness (verses 8-11). The New King James Version sets verses 8-11 inside quotation marks, as in these verses God is speaking within the words of the psalm, referring to Himself with “Me” and “My.”

Although the Israelites had seen God’s wonderful work (verse 9) in delivering them from Egypt by many miracles, they failed to trust Him for their daily needs of food and water.

In verse 8, the NKJV reads, “Do not harden your hearts, as in the day of rebellion, as in the day of trial in the wilderness” (italics added), while the NIV leaves the two italicized words here untranslated: “Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert” (verse 8). At their encampment at Rephidim the people complained against God and Moses because they were thirsty. God gave them water there from a rock, but Moses renamed the site Meribah, meaning “strife, quarreling, contention.” The Greek Septuagint and the New Testament translate this word as “rebellion.” Massah, meaning “testing,” is another name “given to the place where the Israelites murmured for want of water (Ex.17:7; Deut. 6:16; 9:22; 33:8); called also Meribah” (The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary, p. 824, “Massah”).

Yet it was not at this particular rebellion that God declared the older generation of Israelites would not enter His rest, as Psalm 95:11 states. Rather, this came a bit later in Numbers 14 (see verses 28-30). Here the people had refused to progress from their encampment at Kadesh to entering the Promised Land because they feared the giants (the Anakim) there and the fortified cities of the Canaanites (see Deuteronomy 1:28). It was at that time that God “took an oath, saying, ‘Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give your fathers’” (Deuteronomy 1:35). Entry into the Promised Land equated to finding rest (see Exodus 33:14; Deuteronomy 12:10; 25:19; Joshua 1:13, 15). Thus, Meribah and Massah in Psalm 95, while likely alluding on one level to the specific episode at the water, was evidently meant more as a general description of the attitude of the Israelites in their wanderings. Indeed, as noted above, in translating this passage into Greek, the book of Hebrews translates these words as well-showing that they are not mainly intended as place names.

The psalmist states that although God continued to care and provide for the people, He was angry with them during the wilderness years. They never developed a heart receptive to Him or His ways (verse 10). Near the end of their 40 years of wandering, God and the people had another face-off over water at Kadesh (also renamed Meribah). Moses lost patience with the people and struck the rock twice, bringing on himself and Aaron the

severe penalty of being excluded from entering the ancient Promised Land (Numbers 20:1-13; see the Bible Reading Program comments on this passage).

“Rest” in Psalm 95 is “a rich concept indicating Israel’s possession of a place with God in the earth where they are secure from all external threats and internal calamities (see Dt 3:20; 1Ki 5:4...)” (Zondervan, note on Psalm 95:11). The call to not rebel so as to enter God’s rest still applies. This is what Hebrews 3-4 explains, warning Christians against falling into faithless disobedience like ancient Israel (see 3:12-13; 4:11). These New Testament chapters point out that the warning and exhortation of Psalm 95 is given not to those who failed to enter God’s rest in the time of Moses and Joshua, but rather to those long after-in a time David designated as “Today” when he was inspired to compose the psalm (see Hebrews 4:7). The applicable time called “Today” still continues, we are told (verse 8; see also 3:13). Hebrews 4:9 uses the Greek word *sabbatismos*-meaning Sabbath observance (resting from weekly labor), which the ancient Israelites flagrantly violated-to designate the rest God’s people are still to enter today. Moreover, the passage makes clear that this is as a type of the future rest to be experienced in God’s Kingdom-the Promised Land still to come.

To better understand how the weekly Sabbath relates to rest-past, present and future-see the free booklet *Sunset to Sunset: God’s Sabbath Rest*.

We earlier read Psalm 96 in conjunction with 1 Chronicles 16, which concerns David having the Ark of the Covenant brought to its new tabernacle in Jerusalem. The words of Psalm 96, with some alteration, appear as a significant portion of the latter half of the psalm David composed for that occasion (see 1 Chronicles 16:23-33). Portions of Psalms 105 and 106 may also be found in that psalm in 1 Chronicles 16 (see the Bible Reading Program comments on 1 Chronicles 16:4-36; Psalm 105:1-15; 96; 106:1, 47-48).

It appears that the 1 Chronicles 16 psalm was the original composition-later divided into separate psalms, probably for temple worship. Consider that Psalm 96 seems to have been produced through editing the lyrics of 1 Chronicles 16:23-33. Note for instance the following sets of three-sing, sing, sing (verses 1-3), give, give, give (verses 7-9), and let, let, let (verses 11-13).

The parallel arrangement in 1 Chronicles 16 has the words sing just once and the word let four times in a row.

It is interesting in this light to consider the first words of Psalm 96, which do not appear in 1 Chronicles 16: “Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!”-the same as Psalm 98:1 (compare also 33:3; 40:3; 144:9; 149:1). The words of Psalm 96 were probably not new when it was arranged but were being used in a new situation. The music was likely somewhat different, given the word changes. But the main point is probably that all worship songs are to be sung as new-as heartfelt communication rather than rote memorization.

We ought to consider this in singing hymns today. We should always find fresh reasons for praising God. As one commentator suggests: “A new experience of God’s blessing, a new truth discovered in the Word, a new beginning after a crisis, a new open door for service-all of these can make an old song new or give us a new song from the Lord” (Warren Wiersbe, *Be Exultant-Psalms 90-150: Praising God for His Mighty Works*, note on verses 1-3). The psalm further implies that the new song will be a daily expression of the good news of salvation and God’s glorious works (verses 1-3).

Psalm 96 is paired with Psalm 98 in both theme and arrangement. They begin and end quite similarly-and they both demonstrate an expanding throng of praise: 1) the worshipping congregation of Israel proclaiming God among the nations (96:1-5; 98:1-3); 2) all the nations of the earth joining in worship (96:7-10; 98:4-6); and 3) all creation rejoicing (96:11-13; 98:7-9).

As we will see, each of these psalms is followed by a hymn celebrating the Lord’s reign

(compare 97:1; 99:1) and its special benefits for the people of Zion (compare 97:8-12; 99:4-9). "This arrangement suggests that Ps 97 has been linked with 96 and Ps 99 with 98 to form a pair of thematic couplets-introduced by Ps 95" (Zondervan NIV Study Bible, note on Psalm 96).

Psalm 96:4 tells us that God is to be praised for His greatness and that He is to be feared-held in reverent respect and awe-"above all gods." The other "gods" people worship are mere idols, but the true God is the Creator of the universe (verse 5)-which includes anything people might decide to worship. This same reasoning was employed in the previous psalm (95:3-5). God is surrounded by majestic honor, strength and splendor in His sanctuary-in context seeming to refer to not merely His physical house on earth but to His heavenly abode (96:6).

The three-fold call give, give, give in verses 7-8 ("ascribe" in the NIV), which does occur in 1 Chronicles 16, has a parallel in David's words of Psalm 29:1-2. The idea is that of rendering God His due. Examples of what to render are also given here in triplet form: offering, worship and proper fear (96:8b-9). Worshipping "in the beauty of holiness" is also found in the parallel verses above.

Where 1 Chronicles 16 has the directive to "say among the nations, 'The LORD reigns'" (verse 31) as the second of its four "let" verses, it is placed before the "let" verses in Psalm 96. The pairing of this phrase with the comment on the firm establishment of the world in Psalm 96:10, demonstrating God's present sovereignty, is also found in the introduction to the royal psalms of this section (see 93:1). This also introduces the future reign of God through Jesus Christ, when "He shall judge the peoples righteously" (96:10).

In verses 11-12, as noted above, the whole creation is personified as rejoicing at the establishment of that future reign (compare Romans 8:18-23). Where 1 Chronicles 16:33 mentions God as coming to judge the earth (administering His righteous rule and justice throughout it), Psalm 96:13 builds more intensity regarding this theme with the repetition of "He is coming" and the addition of the final sentence describing Christ's coming rule. As already mentioned, a close parallel to the encouraging conclusion in verses 11-13 is found in 98:7-9.

Psalm 97 is another of the royal psalms praising God's sovereignty. While it follows in theme from Psalm 96, it adds the benefits of God's rule to the people of Zion (thematically parallel to Psalm 99 following Psalm 98). As with the other psalms of this section, Psalm 97 may have been composed by David, as the Septuagint attributes it.

At the outset, we again encounter the key to the royal psalms in the phrase "the LORD reigns" (verse 1; see 93:1; 96:10; 99:1). The whole earth, even to the farthest isles, can be glad because His omnipotent rule is founded on righteousness and justice (verse 2b; compare 89:14).

The statement "clouds and darkness surround Him" (Psalm 97:2a) pictures the coming judgment of God on rebellious mankind. At that time, Christ will deal with His enemies in a great display of consuming power and global upheaval (verses 3-5), as detailed in many passages (e.g., Joel 2:2; Zephaniah 1:14-15; Isaiah 2:12, 19; Micah 1:3-4). This will demonstrate His sovereignty as "the Lord of the whole earth" (Psalm 97:5).

Verse 6 says, "The heavens declare His righteousness." In an ongoing sense, the heavens declare God's power and majesty (19:1-4) as well as His establishment of cosmic order and stability. Moreover, in a future sense, the ominous signs in the heavens accompanying Christ's return will demonstrate His intention to bring justice to the earth.

The psalm calls for shame on those who serve idols, whether literal false deities or worthless pursuits that claim their time and attention. Anyone or anything that has been idolized will ultimately be placed in submission to the

true God (see Psalm 97:7). As in the previous two psalms, we are told that God is “above all gods” (verse 9; see 95:3; 96:4).

Zion (Jerusalem) in 97:8 (see also 99:2) can refer to the physical city and its inhabitants, who are glad at the message of God’s sovereignty and coming Kingdom. Jerusalem will in fact be the capital of the world during the reign of Christ. The “daughters of Judah” in 97:8 are taken to mean “villages of Judah” in the NIV, showing the rejoicing of Jerusalem and its outlying communities. In a prophetic context, “Zion” can also refer to God’s spiritual people, His Church. So can the “daughters of Judah,” as the spiritual people of God are Jews in a spiritual sense (see Romans 2:25-29).

Until Christ returns, those who love God must continue to reject evil (verse 10; see also Proverbs 8:13). God’s people benefit from His protection and enlightenment—He is the foundation of their joy (Psalm 97:11-12).

[http://www.ucg.org/bible-commentary/Psalms/98\)-Sing-praise-to-God-for-His-victory,salvation-and-coming-just-rule;-99\)-Worship-the-high-and-holy-King;-100\)Thanksgiving-to-God-who-made-us/default.aspx](http://www.ucg.org/bible-commentary/Psalms/98)-Sing-praise-to-God-for-His-victory,salvation-and-coming-just-rule;-99)-Worship-the-high-and-holy-King;-100)Thanksgiving-to-God-who-made-us/default.aspx)

“Shout Joyfully to the LORD, All the Earth” (Psalms 98-100)

As explained in the Bible Reading Program comments on Psalm 96, that psalm finds a parallel in Psalm 98. Both begin with a call for a new song of praise for the Lord (96:1; 98:1). Both progress through widening circles of praise: first the congregation of worship at the temple (96:1-5; 98:1-3); then all people on earth (96:7-10; 98:4-6); and finally all creation (96:11-13; 98:7-9). And the two psalms end with rather similar language (see 96:11-13; 98:7-9).

Another royal psalm of the set spanning 93-99, Psalm 98 also follows this thematic progression: “(1) a call to praise God as the Savior (vv. 1-3); (2) a call to praise God as the King (vv. 4-6); (3) a call to praise God as the coming Judge (vv. 7-9)” (Nelson Study Bible, note on Psalm 98). As with the other psalms of this section, the Septuagint names David as the author, though this attribution is not confirmed (in fact, only two of the seven, Psalms 95 and 96, have confirmed Davidic authorship).

The end of Psalm 98:1 introduces the psalm as what some call a “Divine Warrior victory song” (Expositor’s Bible Commentary, introductory note on Psalm 98). The imagery of God’s “right hand”—symbolic of favorable action—gaining victory was earlier used of His powerful deliverance of Israel from Egypt (see Exodus 15:6; compare Deuteronomy 4:34). It was God’s “right hand” that afterward delivered the Promised Land into Israel’s hands (Psalm 44:3). The reference in Psalm 98 could just as well refer to God leading Israel’s armies to victory in David’s day or later. It ultimately could also serve as an end-time prophecy of God’s future takeover of this world, as explicitly mentioned at the end of the psalm.

Verse 2 explains that “God’s saving acts in behalf of his people are also his self-revelation to the nations; in this sense God is his own evangelist (see 77:14...see also Isa 52:10)” (Zondervan NIV Study Bible, note on Psalm 98:2). The end of verse 3 will be ultimately realized at the return of Christ in power and glory at the end of the age (compare Isaiah 40:5; Luke 3:6).

Only then will the psalmist’s call for the whole earth to join in a joyous celebration of praise to the Lord, the King, be answered (see verses 4-6). Only then will the whole of creation be liberated from its current bondage to corruption (compare verses 7-8; Romans 8:21).

The psalm ends with the great announcement also made in Psalm 96:13: “He is coming to judge the earth” (98:9)—that is, to rule all nations—and His judgment or rule will be righteous and equitable, meaning fair, reasonable, impartial and just.

Luke 11

We start off this chapter with the Prayer to our Father which shows us how to pray. Rather than me trying to explain this I would urge you all to get a copy of the book by Nehemiah Gordon and Keith Johnson at <http://www.aprayertoourfather.com/author/keith-johnson/>

In verse 9 we read “And I say to you: ask and it shall be given to you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you.

“For everyone asking receives, and he who is seeking finds, and to him who is knocking it shall be opened.

Now in verse 13 we read that it is the Father who is giving the gifts. “If you then, being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father from heaven give the Set-apart Spirit to those asking Him!”

What are the gifts that the Father is giving? It was talking about bread but it was not talking about bread. Bread represents the Torah, the Word of our Father. The Torah shows us His will. We are praying to become more like Him and to have His will, His spirit in us.

Exodus 31:3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of Elohim in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all work,

Exodus 35:31 and He has filled him with the Spirit of Elohim, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all work,

Proverbs 2:1 My son, if you accept my words, And treasure up my commands with you,
So that you make your ear attend to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding;
For if you cry for discernment, Lift up your voice for understanding,
If you seek her as silver, And search for her as hidden treasures,
Then you would understand the fear of ????, And find the knowledge of Elohim.
For ???? gives wisdom; Out of His mouth come knowledge and understanding.

Proverbs 9:10 The fear of ???? is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Setapart One is understanding¹

Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of ???? shall rest upon Him – the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of ????,

Daniel 1:17 As for these four young men, Elohim gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom. And Dani’?l had understanding in all visions and dreams.

Daniel 2:19 Then the secret was revealed to Dani’?l in a night vision, and Dani’?l blessed the Elah of the heavens. Dani’?l responded and said, “Blessed be the Name of Elah forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. “And He changes the times and the seasons. He removes sovereigns and raises up sovereigns. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who possess understanding. “He reveals deep and secret matters. He knows what is in the darkness, and light dwells with Him.

“I thank You and praise You, O Elah of my fathers. You have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of You, for You have made known to us the sovereign’s matter.”

Colossians 1:9 That is also why we, from the day we heard, have not ceased praying for you, and asking that you be filled with the knowledge of His desire in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,

“For everyone asking receives, and he who is seeking finds, and to him who is knocking it shall be opened. And we ask for Knowledge and seek understanding and when we do this we will gain wisdom. And this is the spirit of Yehovah.

The last part of Chapter 11 Yehshua rails on the Scribes and Pharisees and how they today build tombs for the Prophets which their father had killed.

According to the Mosaic law, anyone who touched a grave was rendered unclean (Numbers 19:16). That they might not touch graves and be made unclean without knowing it, the Jews white-washed their graves and tombs once a year. But Yehshua likens a Pharisee to graves which defiled men unawares. Their hypocrisy concealed their true nature, so that men were injured and corrupted by their influence without being aware of it.

Tombs were usually dug in the rock in the sides of hills or cliffs. To build them therefore was to decorate or ornament the entrance. Though their act in building the sepulchers was a seeming honor to the prophets, Yehovah did not accept it as such. A prophet is only truly honored when his message is received and obeyed. The lawyers were not in fellowship with the prophets, but with those who murdered the prophets: hence the Saviour pictures the whole transaction from the killing of the prophets to the building of their sepulchers as one act in which all concurred, and all of which were guilty. Abbott gives the words a figurative meaning, thus: your fathers slew the prophets by violence, and you bury them by false teaching.